

Ho Ho Ho. Santa is roaming the halls of Congress. Last week, I told you about how Speaker Pelosi handed out billions of dollars in giveaways and pork projects in the emergency funding bill for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, it seems the Senate is taking things a step farther by planning a... Ho Ho Ho. Santa is roaming the halls of Congress. Last week, I told you about how Speaker Pelosi handed out billions of dollars in giveaways and pork projects in the emergency funding bill for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, it seems the Senate is taking things a step farther by planning a Christmas celebration.

Bloated spending bills often get called "Christmas Tree's" because of the spending added into them are like presents wrapped up under the tree for members to enjoy. But, the Senate's version of the war funding bill literally pays for the Christmas tree too. Among the more than \$20 billion for things other than war spending is a provision to provide millions for Christmas tree farm assistance. There is also a provision that deals with the proceeds of holiday ornament sales at the Senate day care center....I guess the only thing they left out was the fruit cake.

Below is a sampling of what Santa and his elves (I mean the Democratic leadership) will be handing out:

- \$1.2 billion for dairy farmers
- \$24 million for sugar beet growers
- \$100 million for the Presidential Nominating Convention's that are over two years away. It is included in a section described as "Katrina recovery, veterans' care and for other purposes."
- \$3.5 million for guided tours of the U.S. Capitol Building
- \$1.5 billion for livestock production losses
- \$2.1 billion for crop production losses
- \$3 million for a sugar cane cooperative in Hawaii
- \$20 million to combat cricket infestation
- \$2 million to start the "Educational Excellence Program" at the University of Vermont
- \$400 million for various Transportation Department projects
- \$12 million for Forest Service money requested by the president in the non-emergency FY2008 budget

- \$22.8 million for geothermal research and development
- \$640 million for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- \$13 million for a Ewe Lamb Replacement and Retention Programs
- \$32 million for Livestock Indemnity Program
- \$115 million for the Conservation Security Program
- \$40 million for the Tree Assistance Program
- \$100 million for Small Agricultural Dependent Businesses

Yep, it's Christmas here in Congress. But the only gifts we should be receiving are stockings full of coal.